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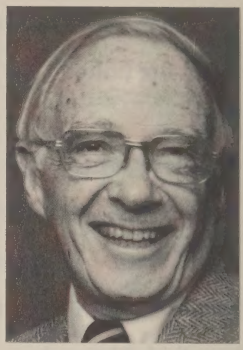


The winter solstice, Hanukkah, Christmas. December has always been a time for celebration; for celebrating and reflecting on our spiritual relationship to the Ultimate Mystery, the Goddess, the divine, God . . . by whatever name, or no-name, we revere the sacred source of all creation.

Joy and celebration don't always come easily, however. In a world of seemingly endless warfare, sickness and poverty, much of humanity seems to have lost its sense of the sacred, of its "reverence for life" in the words of Albert Schweitzer. Indeed, we often seem determined to destroy each other—and the environment that supports our very existence—in the name of "growth" and technological "progress."

At the same time, we are clearly living in a transition period when the potential for change and transformation is tremendous. This instant, this lightning flash in the five billion year old history of God's ongoing creation, is so complex, so rich in potential, so interrelated in all its psychological, biological, cosmological, and spiritual modes of being, that everything each one of us thinks and says and does can make a significant difference in the quality of life and the future of our species on planet Earth.

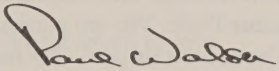
Surely, there has never been a more challenging or exciting time to be alive and never has the practice of prayer and meditation been more essential for our individual, societal and planetary salvation.

Through prayer and meditation we can reconnect with the wisdom and compassion and loving kindness that are at the heart of our true nature. We can once again see, and feel, and deeply experience our interrelatedness with every other strand in the web of life. We can reignite our passion for loving and caring for each other and all that God created. In her enthralling new book, *States of Grace*, published by Harper San Francisco, Charlene Spretnak describes how she feels on emerging from an intensive meditation retreat:

> "There they were again: the mindstates that arise when mind is in a relatively pure condition—cleansed of fear, anger, craving, ill will, and such—

in which the natural world is perceived as surprisingly vivid and wondrous. Gratitude and celebration indeed fill the mind, frequently and when least expected. One feels brimming over with thankfulness and joy for life on Earth."

December is surely a season for such celebration. A time to get in touch again with the good will and loving kindness of our true nature. As Buddhism's *Life Prolonging Kannon Sutra* says, "Our true nature is Eternal, Joyous, Selfless and Pure." So let our prayer and meditation this month be *Joy to the world*! May love and peace surround us all this holiday season.



Paul Walsh

Dr. Arthur Caliandro Named Clergyman of the Year

A Member of the Board of Trustees of Fellowship in Prayer was recently honored at a special banquet in St. Louis, Missouri, where he received the Clergyman of the Year Award given by Religious Heritage of America. Every year this non-political, interfaith organization honors those Americans who have best upheld the Judeo-Christian principles of our heritage. Past honorees have included such notable clergy as Dr. Billy Graham, Father Theodore Hesburgh, Dr. Robert Schuller and Marble's own former senior minister, Dr. Norman Vincent Peale. We are particularly proud that a Member of our Board was honored this year. Our heartfelt congratulations to him.

Mary Ford-Grabowsky

Rev. Dr. Arthur Caliandro

I am the same to all beings. My love
Is the same always. Nevertheless, those
Who meditate on me with devotion,
They dwell in me, and I shine forth in them.

Bhagavad Gita

All my followers shall cultivate a contemplative nature by meditating daily, seeking the light, drawing the lesson from each experience and identifying with infinite intelligence.

Hindu Sutra

The soul is made of love, and must ever strive to return to love.

Mechthild of Magdeburg

Oh, when will that blessed hour come when You will visit me and gladden me with Your blessed presence, so that You are to me all in all. As long as that gift is not given me, there will be in me no full joy.

Thomas à Kempis

God is no further off than the door of your heart.

Meister Eckhart

Ransack your day for hidden opportunities to go against self-will. A little opportunity here, another there—you will see how your meditation deepens.

Eknath Easwaran

Vincent van Gogh went out to paint the stars whenever he felt "a terrible need of . . . religion."

Charles Cummings

Is your eyesight dimmer? Then the world is seen by you in a cathedral light. Is your hearing duller? Then it is just as though you were always where loud voices and footsteps ought not to be heard. . . . Yes, old age makes us like daily dwellers in the house of the Lord.

William Mountford

[Free will is] the sustaining of a thought because I choose to when I might have other thoughts.

Charles Renouvier

Creativity

DOROTHY GAMBRILL

"Creative energy increases with use," while "unused talents die." Here is a challenge to put your imagination to work and come fully alive by expressing your own unique creativity in your own individual way.

You are alive. Therefore, you are creative. From birth on, you are a living, breathing, creative expression.

Welcome your creativity. It is your best friend. Your earth life assignment is to *fully* express your unique creativity. If you sense it early in life, you are blessed. Most of us require a long, and often painful, discovery process. The struggle itself is part of the creative act.

No one can do this for you. You alone are responsible. No two people can use creative energy in perfect unison. If that were possible, no one could ever win a race.

The energy you invest developing your creativity determines whether your life is exciting or boring; more importantly, whether you succeed or fail materially and spiritually during your earth life.

Hold no preconceived guidelines as to how creativity looks, acts, feels, works. Perfection is not the criterion for creativity. *Creativity is.* Creative expression has no definable boundaries; it is also limitless.

We are all artists. There is an art of planting, an art of cooking, an art of building, an art of loving, an art of conversation, an art of leadership, an art of painting, *ad infinitum.* A single spoken word that expresses a thought is an act of creation. *Beauty, love and right actions* are the art forms of creative spirits.

The inner longing that you cannot identify is a sign that your creative needs are not satisfied. Knowing the origin of your longings, which is a need for self expression, is the seed from which you develop your particular talents.

To think you were born with no talents is to think you have no reason-for-being. That simply is not true. Remember, you are alive. Therefore, you are creative.

A freelance writer in Nebraska, Dorothy Gambrill was for many years an advertising copywriter. The title of her forthcoming book is Soul Work.

The Nature of Creativity

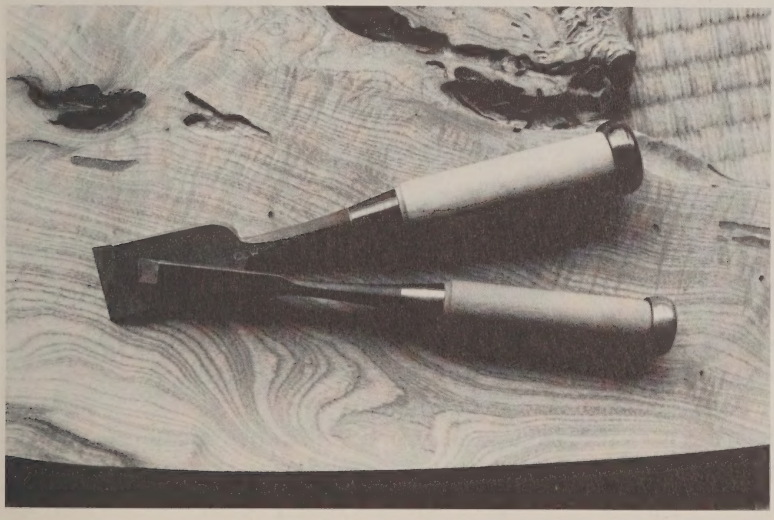
The nature of creativity is renewal. People who work well while confronting tragedy, stress, failure are creative expressions. People who live through horrendous disasters, overcoming devastating hardships, know how to renew themselves despite a world bent on their destruction. The surviving fittest sustain a strong, creative, growing society.

Negative conditions (sins) are human-made. Pure creativity, pure knowing is free flowing, joyous, unadulterated. You have a feeling of inner body space, air, light. The God-force, God-love, God-creativity passes unhampered through you.

A Life of its Own

Creativity is a progressive process. The creative drive is so strong that the person who releases it cannot *control* its direction. The process is closer to *following* creativity. The completed creation takes on a life of its own, apart from its creator.

From a distance, say in one week, one month, one year, you still like what you created; rest easy. You did a good job.



Tom Dunham

Creative Characteristics

If your unique creativity is strong, you remain your own master—you must. You cannot enjoy working out someone else's ideas. Your own dynamic personality wants expression.

No matter where you work, you cannot comfortably carry out another person's system. The creative force rebels at restrictions. It must go somewhere, finding an outlet. Creativity *demands* expression. Unless you are given this freedom, you will work unhappily.

People who live creatively *hear*, especially their own songs.

Trust who you are; trust your unique life assignment. Refrain from looking around, from comparing your personality, your achievements, your "self," your life, against another's. Otherwise, you might spend a lifetime fruitlessly *imitating rather than creating*.

Set no restrictive goals. Simply release your music, food, letters, books, ideas. An audience will show up, however small. One other person is an audience.

Holding patterns are non-creative. Creative energy increases with use. Warning: after one creative expression is complete, you will soon look around for another. Your "self" does not feel satisfaction for long. This is *Divine restlessness*, the force that keeps life in movement.

How to Break Out

Look around. If your life is very much like everyone else's, you are not living creatively; that is, with *imagination*.

A world of people hang in, supporting the system. People who live creatively are wanting. Imagination and regimentation cannot survive, side by side.

If you allot all your time to maintenance work, bypassing creative projects that renew your spirit, blame yourself. By shutting out fresh creativity, deferring to imaginary limitations, you invite an erosion that will seep into creative areas already alive. You'll end up barren or passive, which means your creativity is blocked. Unused talents die.

You might not complete every project, leaving unfulfilled the idea behind it. That is dangerous. *You never reach a closure*. Contentment escapes you.

Force yourself to complete one half-done project, then another. In

Tom Dunham

time, you are more selective of your *beginnings*. You learn your pleasures. You can discern between novelty and compatibility.

If conflicting interests are out of sight, centering attention on a single creative project is easier. Neatness is helpful, but a filing system should never dominate creativity. Mentally blocking out messes is a happy alternative to tidiness. The over-tidy keep putting away their creative selves.

Each person must devise his or her own system for boxing-in creativity long enough to finish a form communicable to other people; that is, a thing one can sell or show others.

Not focusing on a single idea until it reaches maturity is the obstacle that prevents productive creativity, which means the practical application of an art form. Creativity on the loose produces ideas too fast, too often. Giving all of them life is impossible.

It is a myth that creative people are undisciplined. Concentration is a discipline. It is the handling of creative ideas *one at a time*.

You begin by putting together pieces and parts first in your head, then by hand, and always from *your heart*. The whole is the art form. The more completed product fits together in a pleasing way; that is, *in harmony*, the finer the art development.

The learning process feels disoriented. You think you are losing your natural talents. Not so. You are disciplining creativity so you can use it effortlessly at all times—at will.

When you are skilled at harnessing creativity, *you are more natural than ever*. Your gifts are not hit or miss, but sometimes expressions. After training and discipline, you feel confident and relaxed. You never wonder: "Can I do it this time?" "Will it be as good as last?"

The key to creative progress is breaking out of expected, pre-fixed patterns or time frames. New possibilities open up as soon as you release the way things used to work and you explore alternate routes.

Special Cases

To children: At home, you were an under-achiever, dominated by parents, disciplined by school. You will do better on your own. But you must shake off the conditioning, the carryovers. You must release the creativity that is uniquely yours.

To homemakers: If you clean house and end up cleaning everything in sight, you released creative energy beyond your original intentions.

To writers: Struggling for words is unproductive, uncreative. Instead, struggle for meanings. Get to the core; words follow automatically.

To couples: Couples intrude upon each other's creative areas, fighting for dominance. Human perversity drives us to dominate and control each other whenever possible. Some win, some lose. However, male and female roles complement each other. In no area does competition fit.

Passion

The passion, vital to creativity, between artist and art object excludes other sensibilities. The artist is mad, obsessed, unstructured, the very nature of passion itself. The abandonment threatens the larger society which must maintain law in order to survive. Though creative thinking is hard on organized society, it is vital to life growth.

You might feel embarrassed freeing passions essential to creative growth. You might hesitate, looking around to consider what other people are thinking about. Don't.

A miracle of love happens when you develop your talents *rightly*. The people around you do, too.

Rock Ritual III

ROBERT O'ROURKE

This sequel to "Rock Ritual" and "Rock Ritual II" offers a new way to "open ourselves to the wonders of the natural world."

Shortly before his death in the Summer of 1950, Black Elk, a Holy Man of the Oglala Sioux tribe, shared some of the traditions and rituals of his people. His was a rich legacy earned through fasting, praying, and visioning. Only after much anguish and searching of his soul did he decide to make certain rites and beliefs known; not only as a heritage for his own race but to others who would come after him . . . To all who might be willing to venture beyond their own ethnocentric values to a time when people learned more from the natural world than from words printed in books or images projected on screens.

It is my hope that this small ritual, adapted from a more intricate ceremony, will give the blessing of peace to each person who practices it and bring them to a more intimate, loving relationship with Mother Earth and all of the Great Spirit's Creation. This would be, I am sure, the same wish of a most spiritual man, Black Elk.

Outside my shop window; mounted on a circular board are four rocks arranged to coincide with the four cardinal points of the compass: a red rock faces East . . . a yellow rock represents South . . . a black rock towards the West and a white rock in the direction of the North. The colors correspond to the sacred directions of the Oglala Sioux who turn to each and offer prayers of beseechment and thanksgiving. This ritual has become part of the spiritual path I walk. I share it with you as a tiny fragment along with the invitation to create your personal ceremony in keeping with ancient tradition. We can never fully appreciate the Indian's secret of life but perhaps we can, in some small way, open ourselves to the wonders of the natural world.

1. Face East, the direction of knowledge, new experience, and wisdom. Raise your arms toward the sky and pray:

A Colorado writer, Bob O'Rourke also carves santos, *statues of the saints most revered in New Mexico and the Southwest.*

Lisa A. Smith, whose illustration accompanies this article, is a Colorado artist with a lifelong interest in Native American designs and customs.

Oh, Great Spirit who rules the East, we greet you in joyful salutation. As the sun awakens the earth to a new day make us aware of the beauty that surrounds us . . . the songs of birds, shimmering leaves, cool shadows, fragile flowers. Bless our earth and the lives of humankind with the warmth of your sunshine. Give to us, we pray, new opportunity for adventure, knowledge and a better life.

2. Face South, the direction of fertility, growth, healing and abundance. Relax, breathe in deeply and fold your hands while you pray:

Oh, Spirit of the South, where soft winds give birth to Spring and earth's abundance, touch our lives with gentleness. Heal our mind-body; bring relief to the suffering of others; be a respite and comfort for the wounds inflicted on our Mother Earth. Lead us in simple paths of healing . . . a smile, eyes of understanding, hands that reach out to serve.

3. Bow to the West, the place of meditation, forgiveness and spiritual strength. Take another deep breath, pause and pray:

> Oh, Great Mystery, as we face the West, where rain clouds dance across the sky, where thunder speaks and the sun splashes the heavens with a benediction of color, silence our lives, quiet our minds, cleanse our souls. Teach us the wisdom of quiet meditation in the pauses-of-life where You speak. Teach us to listen, release, forgive, and feel Your Presence inside ourselves, in rocks, trees, and all peoples of the earth.

4. Face North. Again breathe deeply with arms at your side, palms upturned, and address the direction of strength, endurance, honesty, purity, and cleansing:

> Oh, Mother-Father of all that is created, we look now toward the place where frigid winds spread blankets of snow across the earth. A season to endure, to gain strength and experience cleansing. We ask for hope in the face of our suffering, courage born of the truth, a heart that is pure. You, who know us by name, help us walk a straight path.

Follow your ritual with a pause and silent meditation. Listen! Close with your own sacred gesture before entering your daily activities.

May you walk in beauty!

THOMAS MORE PAGE

Listen!

Listen to your life.
Listen and be still.
Listen with the ears of the sentinel
Alert to the sounds of the night.
Listen to love cresting over forgotten days—
Soundless, breaking infinitely slow.
Do not speak.
Gather together your life
Let the past well slowly up from your depths
And collect it as you might
Spring water in a cool dipper.

I pray

that life may never become as stale
as cheese too hard to chew.
that dreams may never become as broken
as windows in a deserted home.
that hope may never become as faded
as the pages of yesterday's newspaper.
that love may never become as sour
as milk too bitter to drink.

"He showed me a little thing. . . ."

Juliana of Norwich

"The hills, to me, was somethin' God put here in the beginnin', and they have been here, I imagine, for four million years. The streams were clear, the timber was green, there was all sorts of wildlife. They weren't put here to be torn all to hell by bulldozers by greedy people." Joe Begley, Blackey, Ky. In Studs Terkel, *American Dreams: Lost & Found.*

Juliana:
In your anchorite hold

You held
The universe, the size of a hazelnut—
In the span
Of your hand—
A gift from your love, maker,
And keeper.

Juliana:
I pray
That there be somewhere today
An anchorite hold
Where you can pass on
The universe, the size of a hazelnut,
To the span
Of a loving hand
Before the gift of your lover, maker
And keeper
Falls into the calloused hands
Of raiders and earth-brigands.

Spirituality and Integrity

A. W. RICHARD SIPE

For this writer, "the unexamined life is not worth living." Even humiliating self-knowledge is better than denying one's own biography.

I would like to invite you to reflect with me on the four basic elements that sum up the essence of Wisdom, as Joseph Gallagher once put it in the *National Catholic Reporter*. One might call them the foundation of any personal integrity. They are (1) know yourself; (2) accept yourself; (3) invest yourself; and (4) forget yourself.

Element 1: Know Yourself.

These are words that none of us claim as an exclusive heritage of our particular religious tradition. "Know yourself" was, as you know, the motto inscribed on the temple of Apollo at Delphi in ancient Greece. People flocked there to the oracle, seeking answers to life's hurts and mysteries and uncertainties. Each of us can probably find an equivalent principle in his or her own tradition. For me it is the Gospel dictum: "The Truth shall make you free." Confucian scripture puts the same reality in these words:

It is wisdom to know others
It is enlightenment to know one's self.
The conqueror of men is powerful;
The master of himself is strong.
It is the wealth to be content,
It is willful to force one's way on others.
Endurance is to keep one's place;
Long life it is to die and not perish.
Lao Tzu, 86

Here we are confronted with the essence of all spiritual integrity: self-knowledge, self-mastery, peace, and acceptance of one's place in the

A lecturer in psychiatry at Johns Hopkins Medical School, Richard Sipe has a psychotherapy practice in Timonium, MD. His latest book is A Secret World: Sexuality and the Search for Celibacy. *His article is taken from a talk given to the New Jersey Chaplain's Association.*

scheme of nature. But the simple fact remains and is unavoidable, universal, and immutable: there can be no spirituality—integrity is impossible—without self-knowledge. This is a fact so simple, so obvious, and in a way so unassailable, but it is oh, so difficult to attain. Boldly stated, as in Delphi, "Know yourself" is both the beginning and the culmination of wisdom. All religious experience and all science validate the truth. What you and I also know from our own searches and ministries is that this *knowing* is also a process. It is here, in the very foundation of spiritual life, that science and religion converge. All of modern psychological science validates ancient wisdom in this regard: self-knowledge is essential to growth. Yet self-knowledge is not an easily won prize. It is easy to distract ourselves, and it is tempting to deceive ourselves. It is deliciously perverse to avoid the struggle at times—like turning off the alarm and just staying in bed, pulling the warm blankets of our self-ignorance up around us, isolating ourselves from the cold realities of our liabilities, our weaknesses, and our blind spots. But of course the isolation and insulation do not sustain us because they keep us from recognition of our gifts, our strong points, and thus our real potential.

Another way we can avoid self-knowledge is by keeping ourselves so busy, so occupied—even in the pursuit of good works and the ministry—that we cannot hear ourselves above the noise of our life. As Joe Gallagher puts it, "We keep our lives so noisy that we can't eavesdrop on the secret murmuring of our own hearts."

We all have needs and desires. Modern psychology has taught you and me that many of these needs and desires are out of our consciousness, that they will have effects in our lives whether we acknowledge them or not, but we can only direct them, manage them, and channel them to the degree that we face them as part and parcel of ourselves. Superficially our needs and desires are alarming. They are our particular passions (the ancients named them, the tendencies of us all: pride, covetousness, lust, anger, gluttony, envy, and sloth). These are old names—realities renewed in the existence of each one of us.

David Berenson said that good psychotherapy is "optimal humiliation." Essentially, that is what self-knowledge is: optimal humiliation; it faces us with ourselves *as we are*.

This is a frightening prospect for each of us. Who are we (am I) behind the image? What is it that others miss—don't know—when they criticize or praise, or worse yet, when they ignore me? Or what is it that others

Brooks Walsh

do know about me that I am ignoring? You know the old prayer: "Please God, let me see myself as others see me." All real prayer leads us to increasing degrees of self-awareness. We inevitably confront the reality of who is God and who am I. All of us know how resistive our hearts and minds are to this path of self-awareness. We inevitably confront the reality of who is God and who am I. Those of us who have dedicated our lives to psychotherapy, counseling, or directing others know the struggle involved in helping another person to self-knowledge. No matter how well motivated a person is, we know how resistant his or her heart is to change. For those of us in the ministry, prayer and ministry become the dual paths to self-knowledge.

We are all alike—minister and parishioner, counselor and counselee, comforter and comforted—we have divided hearts and minds. And as much as we would like instantaneous or intellectual integrity or automatically efficacious spirituality, *it is not possible*. The hard work of facing our divisions precedes the possibility of integrating them. First, we have divided hearts; the human condition is a fractured condition. We are capable of being our own worst enemy.

I cannot tell you the number of Catholic priests I have interviewed who recounted how they faced for the first time the depths of their own passion when they counseled hurting women or men or when they were confronted with the enormity of their doubts as they instructed others in faith or when they wrestled with anger as they led others to peace and justice.

The lines that separate good and evil, health and illness, strength and weakness are not lines *between* the helpers and the helped, between the counselor and counselee. There is a vague inner space in all of us which is mixed, undelineated, and only sorted out with great effort.

No person can *minister*—really serve others—without facing this jagged, dark, and frightening territory called the *self*. Knowledge of ourselves is the first price we have to pay for both spirituality and integrity.

Benedict of Nursia, born in 480, wrote a rule—a primer of spirituality—that served as a guide for many religious leaders. In it he outlined that process of spiritual growth in 12 steps of humility. The last of these steps states that the accomplished disciple "always manifests humility in his bearing no less than in his heart" and judges himself guilty on account of his sins. At one time I was very disdainful of that description as the height of spiritual growth.

That vocabulary, phraseology, and imaging seem foreign to our generation, especially as being the *height* of some spiritual accomplishment. My own personal psychoanalysis was valuable in helping me to under-

> We keep our lives so noisy that we can't eavesdrop on the secret murmuring of our own hearts.

stand Benedict's observations. One day as I was leaving an hour, having complained bitterly about some of the real (and imagined) deprivations of my youth, my analyst reflected, "You can't forgive life, can you?". That was one of those moments of grace when I had ears and *could* hear. It put me in my place. That is what all self-knowledge does: puts us *in our rightful place*. It was, as the Confucian wise man said, or again, as Berenson said of psychotherapy, optimal humiliation.

Element 2: Accept Yourself.

The second element in the foundation of integrity is to accept yourself. (The whole of psychotherapy is putting one's biography together.)

Again, this challenge is more easily said than accomplished. If the test of self-knowledge is to face ourselves (and God) as we are (to know ambivalence) then the task of self-acceptance is to embrace ourselves and to integrate the elements that make us *us*.

This is not a passive maneuver, being indifferent to our imperfections, or as Gallagher says, to "conspire lazily with one's vices." "It does mean forgiving ourselves for being inescapably human and flawed and limited."

But real self-knowledge leads to action. Goethe tied self-knowledge to action (reform) this way: "How can we learn to know ourselves? . . . By action. Try to do your duty and you will soon find out what you are. But what is your duty? The demands of each day."

If we know ourselves but refuse to accept ourselves, we invariably become cynics—as Oscar Wilde said, knowing the price of everything and the value of nothing.

Element 3: Invest Yourself.

Gallagher recalls a boyhood couplet:

One who lives for oneself alone
Lives for the meanest creature known.

Religious tradition is filled with the paradox of service to our fellow humans: "the seed must die to have life"; "the one who would save his or her life will have to lose it." I do think that your experience will validate as mine has that "the world's happiest, most fulfilled people are those who are dedicated to something beautiful or something true or something good, that is bigger, more important and more lasting than one life's fleeting and futile flame of ego." (Gallagher)

Self-investment is not mere activity; it is service that can stand the test of examination, reinforced by *example*. We could all agree, I suppose, that we should be examples by what we preach and teach and do.

The Confucian master a thousand years before the birth of Christ said:

Indeed the Wise Man's office
Is to work by being still;
He teaches not by speech
But by accomplishment;
He does for everything,

Neglecting none;
This life he gives to all,
Possessing none;
And what he brings to pass
Depends on no one else.
As he succeeds,
He takes no credit
And just because he does not take it,
Credit never leaves him.

Paul Walsh

A danger in self-investment that is ungrounded in self-knowledge/acceptance is *workaholism*. Even in the name of our religious faith, even in the service of God's poor, workaholism is still an addiction and inevitably leads to spiritual exhaustion and burnout. We cannot give what we do not have.

Element 4: Forget Yourself.

To come to this point, the capacity for self-forgetfulness, we have to escape our burdensome selves. Paradoxically, we have to go through self-analysis. Sometimes this involves the aid of a professional.

In 1954 when Dr. Leo Bartemeier, my mentor and friend, was president of the American Psychiatric Association, he said that every minister ought to have at least two years of psychotherapy before he or she was qualified to minister to others. The media jumped all over this, and on national television Bartemeier backed down and said that "it would be a good thing" but not necessary. In private, however, he maintained his conviction that if men and women were going to take on the harsh responsibility of helping others in the ways that ministry demands, then they ***needed*** psychotherapy—the self-knowledge that leads to service. The danger always is that the helper will use the helped (the more vulnerable) and will impose on the trust that is so hopefully and readily placed in a counselor.

In the 1970s, a huge study was done of the characteristics that people value most in their clergy. Self-forgetfulness was the first of nine characteristics:

1. The willingness to serve without looking for acclaim (just another way of saying self-forgetfulness).
2. Personal integrity.
3. Personal lived religion; he or she should set a good example.
4. Competence.
5. Community leadership.
6. An empathetic counselor.
7. That the clergyperson be a thinker, a student.
8. That the clergyperson be able to perform under pressure.
9. The acceptance of ongoing need for personal growth.

The Confucian master also valued self-forgetfulness:

The Wise Man chooses to be last
And so becomes the first of all;
Denying self, he too is saved.
For does he not fulfillment find
In being an unselfish man?

What I have tried to present to you are what I consider the four basic elements of spirituality and integrity: self-knowledge, self-acceptance, self-investment, and self-forgetfulness.

This Holiday Season Give the Gift of "Wisdom, Love, Goodness, and Joy."

Those gifts come in each issue of *Fellowship in Prayer*, says Tod Broderick, of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. He writes: "Thank you, thank you, thank you for this beautiful publication. Wisdom, love, goodness, truth and joy envelop me every time *Fellowship in Prayer* arrives at my door."

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If you would like to hear from people in your area (or overseas), please send us your name and address, and we will list it in our next issue.

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Into the Light

DARLENE PRESTBO

This compelling story of descent into darkness and recovery in the light shows that one God speaks through the wisdom of many religious traditions. Here fresh insights from Women's Spirituality illuminate knowledge from Sufism, Islam, Buddhism, Native American thought, and Christianity.

It was near dawning-time and still the High Council had not adjourned. Within the circle were two beings shimmering from the energy of their intense debate. Aurora Titania pushed back her cloak in exasperation, causing the iridescent fabric to quiver. As High Priestess and gatekeeper of the Healing Mysteries, she was not used to being thwarted, not even by her beloved brother. Pan, the Master Fairy, priest and sage of honor and reknown, stopped pacing and turned to face his sister. His eyes, black and limpid as the water of a still, deep pool, held her gaze as he spoke.

"You will be caught in the tangle of your stubbornness just as the gnat becomes entwined in the spider's web. Give up this fierce wish of yours. There is danger in the doing which even your great shield of love cannot withstand. I beg you, my dear sister, heed my words."

The priestess sighed softly and looked from face to face around the circle. Good fairy folk, all of them, forming a community of love and caring that vibrating with the healing energy of lucumi, devoted friendship. She had sung and danced and played with them for nights unnumbered. And they revered her as a hagia, or holy woman who knew the

Darlene Prestbo is a board-certified social worker in private practice in the Princeton area. A lecturer and workshop leader, she is active in women's spirituality and serves as a deacon in the Presbyterian Church. Her articles have appeared in various publications, including "Women's Recovery Network" and "Lightworks."

Janet Gnall

ways of nature, divination and the healing arts. When she finally looked again at her brother, she began to speak with a voice both resonant and deep.

"There is no turning back. I must go. I am pulled by some inextricable force, just as a leaf is pulled spinning downward by a whirling funnel of water. The beings on the earth-plane suffer anguish and emptiness, longing to know healing and peace. I, Aurora Titania, hope-bringer and priestess of the Great Mother, will become one of them." And with these words, she lifted high her sacred sprig of rosemary.

Pan looked for a sign from the Queen and saw the nod of her head. His sister had won her victory. His response was in the ancient dialect, "Aché!" So be it. That word had within it the power of the life force. Pan then raised his wand, the tip glowing as if it were a cluster of stars. Smiling gently at his cherished sister, he said softly to her, "Blessed be."

Now that the decision had been made, the fairies began moving noisily and briskly. They piled blossoms from every fragrant flower upon a low stone altar in a nearby grove. Pan felt a mingling of reverence and grief as he escorted his sister to the holy shrine and helped her lie down upon it. Led by the Queen, a procession of fairies formed a sacred spiral and then danced in a circle around the altar, chanting songs of praise and blessing to their beloved priestess. Tiny beings, appearing as mere twinklings of light, flitted between the dancers and hovered over the figure nestled in rose petals and blossoms of rainbow splendor.

The dawning-time had finally come, heralded by a soft glow in the east. Suddenly the sky directly above the altar split open and great shafts of lavender light flowed down. Aurora Titania became enveloped in the pulsating purple glow. It was difficult for her to see the face of her brother, so boyish and yet at the same time so very old. Pan looked at her with eyes painfully sad with the knowing of his loss. "Fare thee well, my sister. Your spirit will always dwell within the garden of my heart. Do not forget us. Our love goes with you. Do not forget."

She felt herself dissolving into the mist which surrounded her. At once icy jabs and rough contractions wracked her body in bewildering spasms. Unfamiliar emotions of fear, panic, shame, separation and absolute aloneness engulfed her. She saw the nothingness of black oblivion. This is not how it was supposed to be! None of her experience, wisdom or lore had prepared her for this terror. "Oh, Pan. Help me remember."

Faintly yet unmistakably in her awareness was the rich sweet scent of lilac. And then she was gone.

Janet Gnall

* * * * *

There had never been a night as black as this, no moon nor stars, not even a flash of lightning to crack open the sky. The dark plunged below her feet, obliterating any sense she had of ground or path. She feared being absorbed by the blackness, to be lost forever in nothingness. From her knotted belly, terror slithered up to wind around her heart and then nudge at her throat. But the scream remained silent within her gaping lips.

Aurora Titania was utterly, absolutely alone. She imagined that her eyes held the same terrified look as the young rabbit she had once seen, foot caught in a tangle of ivy, dangling head down over the edge of a high river bank. Her mind, confused and bewildered, became numb as fear weakened and paralyzed her body. Breathing in ragged gasps, she moaned over and over again, "No. No. No."

Against her will, she was propelled forward in a meandering movement. Wisps of murky grey began to seep into the blackness, swirling together into fingers of dense fog. This, at least, had the sense of something familiar to Aurora Titania. She faintly remembered the night she had become confused and lost in the forest near the meadow, when an impenetrable fog had disguised the landscape. There she had kept her courage, here she was without hope.

She was still drifting forward. Suddenly a figure of a woman, shrouded in grey like the fog, loomed in front of her. The woman's face, pinched and creased by deep wrinkles, was infused with a spectral glow. She held in one withered hand a large, throbbing toad. Aurora Titania stood transfixed as the ancient crone began to speak. "Pay homage to me, for I am Hecate, the hinge between death and life, Goddess of Crossroads. Look now and choose which one of these three paths you will take."

The heavy mists began to thin, revealing three widely separated roadways behind the goddess. Aurora Titania felt the panic of indecision. How could she possibly know which path to choose, when each one faded into nothingness. Finally her eyes lifted to meet Hecate's. "I will go where there is most need of love," she said with a resolve which startled her. The goddess murmured, "So be it!" and pointed to the roadway on the left.

Now Aurora Titania could feel a firmness beneath her feet. She began to walk, glad to be free of the compelling pressure which had seemed to push her. The landscape was still a vast emptiness but no longer envel-

oped in blackness or fog. She was frightened by a burst of orange light and a commanding voice. "Abjure the Why and seek the How." There was silence, then a cascade of red light and a resounding proclamation. "I and all things in the universe are one. I am the Light of the world. I, too, am Allah, the Compassionate and Beneficient."

Awed, she dropped to her knees. A streak of green light passed in front of her, swiftly followed by the majestic voice. "I am Citche Manitou, the Great and Eternal Mystery that is within all things and around all things." Yellow light arched high above, and again the voice spoke. "I am also the Buddha. Thine own consciousness, shining and inseparable from the Great Body of Radiance, hath no birth nor death." Then a vibrant violet light swirled gracefully and from it came a voice both tender and loving. "Behold, I have carved you upon the palms of my hands."

Silence prevailed. She stood up, dazed and trembling. From afar off she heard Hecate calling to her, "Go now. Enter through the gateless gate." As Aurora Titania began her journey once again, she glanced back to see a glowing double rainbow. Then she stepped into the unknown.

Ask Angela

BARBARA ACKERMAN

Dear Angela,

I read your article on grief in the October issue of *FiP*. Do you have any further suggestions that might help us through the mourning period following the death of a loved one?

Thank you,
At a Loss

Dear At a Loss,

I appreciate your writing to me about this issue right now. Like you, I am also going through a mourning period. I recently lost my loyal Kibble partner and companion of thirteen years, Captain. I am in the thick of my own grief work on this loss and have made steady progress toward the sixth stage of grief, which is "acceptance." How have I done this? By doing my grief work, which I discuss at length in my October column. Also, I have used all of the following techniques myself to excellent advantage.

(1) Design and carry out a simple good-bye ceremony for your beloved friend. Find some trinket of your own that reminds you of your friend that you'd be willing to part with. Bury this in the backyard with something of your friend's. Remember your friend joyfully.
(2) Howl, yowl, and bark as much as you need to. Noise-making is vital in doing grief work.
(3) Do one thing in your beloved's name every day or at least a couple of times a week. Pick something that would make your friend feel pleased and proud of you. I am a confirmed homebody deeply

Janet Gnall

committed to my hearth. But once a day in Captain's name, I bark excitedly to go outside. Even though the walk isn't long, the barking before it is vital to the experience. In this act, I honor my longtime comrade.

(4) Get together regularly with mutual friends to swap and share funny and touching stories about your departed friend.

(5) Make a list of all the great things about your loved one. Set aside time each day to pick one or two traits and allow yourself to take these on as your own. Be this other way for just a few minutes. Use this technique to bring your loved one closer to you. One of Captain's best things was his enthusiasm. I am enthusiastic whenever I see my friend Barbara. I perform a little wiggle-waggle

dance with my hind legs. This sets me moving backwards away from the front door, my ultimate goal, which in my enthusiasm I have totally forgotten about. This wiggle-waggle is my ultimate expression of eagerness. I honor Captain when I do it and feel him close to me.

(6) Set aside quiet time every day to ponder your private parables. Call this "Parable Time." This is a review of all of the lessons you've learned from the life your loved one has led. Use parables for courage and comfort. Here are a few parables from thirteen Captain years.
   (a) Never underestimate the possibility of love creeping up on you slowly, inch by inch.
   (b) If you can't steal another's macaroni-and-cheese sauce, don't let it go to your head. All it means is that they wanted you to have it in the first place.
   (c) It is possible to meet a soul capable of expanding your capacity to love.
   (d) Sighing deeply increases peaceful space.

(7) Create and share a miss list. Though this exercise may seem sad, I have found it comforting to share my Captain missings with other souls also missing Captain. Remember: the family or group that misses together *is* together. Missing your departed loved one is a major part of your life, so make time for it. Do not fight what is happening naturally. Here are some of my Captain missings.
   (a) The sound of his toenails on the wood floors; they have a richer sound than mine do.
   (b) His low notes when we barked together.
   (c) His pushing and nudging to get me out of the way so he could be first at the door for a walk.
   (d) He was always to the left of me or the right of me or in front of me: in short, his "everywhereness."
   (e) Cappy would let go with a deep sigh that was a guru's paradise; I'll miss his serene spirit.

(8) Create and share a wish list or gift list. This gift-giving exercise is a very healing one.
   (a) *I give Cappy* a large picture window filled with comings and goings.
   (b) a large meadow where he is free to romp without a leash,

(c) care packages of chicken, cheese, and Cheerios,
(d) some concrete and asphalt with a few parked cars and some well-used fire hydrants and utility poles,
(e) a parade of joggers, bikers, toddlers, strollers, and other dogs and girls,
(f) flowers,
(g) snow,
(h) crisp and clear autumn weather.

The ideas I've shared with you here are all things I have found most helpful and comforting myself. There is no magic dog biscuit we can chomp on to ease the pain, unfortunately.

I leave you with this final thought: as long as you keep you beloved in your heart, you keep your beloved alive.

Faithfully,
Angela

Birthstar

JEROME B. ROBBEN

Dying at 84, a man "with a look of tough wisdom" creates a Christmas story about the divine spark in the human soul.

He was said to be 84 years old, although I never really had that piece of information substantiated. I met him during one of my routine visits to the hospital as a volunteer—something I had been doing for several years.

Paul was a patient on the floor reserved for people who needed close supervision, but not intensive care. He had some disease which would eventually deprive him of life, and he knew that fact.

He looked like a combination of Ernest Hemingway and Grizzly Adams: a big-boned man with a full beard of gray which gave him the look of tough wisdom. His voice filled the corridors of that floor with a strong and confident timbre. I remember closing my eyes at time and just letting his words surround me with their strength. Perhaps that is why it was so ludicrous to see such a man in bed, swathed in an ill-fitting hospital gown which always seemed to hang to the left of his body. Rather that he be dressed in a red and black checkered shirt, jeans and high boots. Perch a dark blue knit cap on his head and you would have the ideal Paul.

But the truth of the matter was that, despite appearances, he was dying. And even though I was only sixteen at the time, I recognized the horror of such a thought. The man was victim to an unseen microscopic thing which would eventually silence that smooth voice which was a symphony of speaking to so many of us.

I visited with Paul many times—engrossed in his stories of nature and man's connectedness with it. He was a creation-man before most of us realized our relation with all that God has made. Paul lived his life in touch with creations far beyond those most of us experience. Like God, he, too, looked on all that has been made and pronounced it Good.

I was particularly caught up in Paul's story about the star. He has a room with a view of the sky which was a source of constant pleasure for Paul. He would stare out of his window and weave stories about worlds

Jerome Robben says that he is an educator by heart, a storyteller by choice, and likes to relate the Good News in many ways.

far beyond. His star story was one of his creations. The bright star outside his window—the brightest one in the sky, was the Christmas Star. It hovered over Bethlehem as a sign that Christ was born there, beckoning those who saw it to come and greet their Redeemer. The story line was familiar enough. Paul, however, added his own special touch. He said:

> The star used to be much brighter than it is today. The reason for that diminished brightness is that Jesus, wanting to share his birth with each of us, placed in each new-born a spark from that star. He did this so that each one of us, whether finned or furred or winged or legged, could have our own birthstar. Through the star, we are linked, connected to each other. The spark remains with us throughout our lives and when it comes time for our life here to end, the spark returns to the star—to the source. We are united there, too. And that is why each night when we look up at

the star, it is always just a little bit brighter. Other sparks have linked up with it since last we looked.

I used that story with a number of other patients I visited—to ease their fears about the ultimate journey that they would debark on. And everyone seemed to be comforted by the thought that there is no aloneness in creation.

This wise old man, Paul, left our world late one afternoon. I arrived too late to say goodbye or to wish him a happy journey. I was disappointed, but a nurse caught up with me just as I was leaving and gave her condolences. She knew that Paul and I had become fast friends.

"Paul was lucid to the end," she said. "He was telling me about what a beautiful night it was going to be. The sky was clear, no clouds to block the view. Then he said simply: 'the star, the star,' and it was all over."

In my tears I thought: not over, just beginning.

I thanked her and entered the waiting elevator. Paul filled my mind as I left the hospital and walked in the cold air to the car.

Halfway there, I looked up into the dark sky and Paul's star was there. I was struck with the memory of the story he told. And sure enough, that star did look a little brighter tonight. Thank you, Paul, for this sudden burst of joy for knowing you and for being connected to you in this special way.

The star! Brighter than all the others in the sky.

The Extraordinary in the Ordinary

ELIZABETH J. CANHAM

Simple and mundane things—like signs on buildings, weeds, birds and traffic officers—remind this writer that "the fearful desire to hold on ultimately deprives rather than enriches."

"CLUTCH CLINIC." High on a building along London's Old Kent Road, the sign caught my eye. I was traveling on the top deck of a bus, the section reserved for smokers, because there was no room left below. It was a grey day, I was breathing polluted air, and thoughts of God were far from my mind. But then I saw the sign. In that moment it seemed not only to be an advertisement for an automobile repair shop specializing in defective clutches, but an invitation from God to consider whether there were things in my life to which I held on too tightly. It was as though I heard God saying "Come and spend some time in My Clutch Clinic. There is so much I want to give you, but until your hands are empty, until you have stopped clinging to things you think are important, your hands cannot be open to receive My blessing."

Over the next few weeks I pondered the "message" of that sign. I began each prayer time by asking God to help me see the cluttered things that kept me from being open to the Spirit. Attitudes, life-style, friendships, and work all came under scrutiny and I began to keep a journal, recording my thoughts and outlining new directions as I learned to let go. A fresh image came to me, one that dated back to early childhood. A small child, holding some candy she did not want to share clutched it tightly, until all that was left was a sticky, inedible mess! Were things really so different in adult life? The prayer and the journaling taught me that the fearful desire to hold on ultimately deprives rather than enriches.

Seeing that sign was a breakthrough in prayer for several reasons. Not only did it lead to some important changes in my life, but it taught me that God "speaks" in the most surprising and unexpected ways. For as long as I can remember daily prayer and reflection time has been a vital

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Tom Dunham

part of my life. I would begin each morning with quiet, reading Scripture, offering the coming hours to God, and then getting on with the business of the day. Prayer was important, but it was confined to those times set aside for the purpose. I did not really think of the ordinary events of the day as a time when prayer might continue to happen, and when the presence of God could be known in fresh ways. If I could hear God speak through a sign over an auto shop, what other insights might occur if I opened my eyes to the possibility of seeing the holy in the ordinary?

What I discovered that dull afternoon in London is not new in religious tradition. The monk, Brother Lawrence, made the same discovery when he was sent to work in the monastery kitchen. At first he was disappointed at being assigned such humdrum work, but then he decided to treat the stove as his altar and all the pots and pans as holy vessels. Lovingly he cared for them, paying attention to what he was doing, and prayerfully offering to God his work as cook. Instead of regretting that he was not engaged in more "holy" work, he praised God in the ordinary and found it transformed into the holy. His book *The Practice of the Presence of God*, has been a classic for many centuries, and has helped count-

less people discover the presence of God in the most ordinary activities. In the seventeenth century, Jean Pierre de Caussade coined the phrase "the sacrament of the present moment" to emphasize that all of life is holy. Like a sacrament in which God is both hidden and revealed, each minute may be transfigured with the glory of God. De Caussade wrote that the duties of each moment are like shadows "beneath which the divine action lies concealed." When we open our eyes and let go of traditional ways of looking at things, God is there and we begin to pray our experience.

The Clutch Clinic sign caught my eye unexpectedly. What happened as a result has led me to be more conscious of the possibility that God may speak through mundane things. I now try to look out for signs of the presence of God as I go about my daily tasks. A weed, forcing its way through the sidewalk, causes me to stop to consider the dynamic energy of God's Spirit, and to pray for that power in my life. One day a row of pigeons, perched on the long arm of a traffic signal over a grid-locked intersection in New York City seemed to be mocking the madness of the frantic commuters and honking taxi cabs. I watched the birds, smiled, and let go of my own frenzied rush; I decided to walk the 45 blocks to work. I was there almost as soon as the bus would have been and, free of impatient worry, I prayed as I went, repeating words of Scripture that formed a rhythm with my pace.

When we open our eyes and let go of traditional ways of looking at things, God is there and we begin to pray our experience.

Perhaps the most surprising word from God that has come to me recently was spoken by a traffic officer! I was almost home after a long trip and not paying much attention to the speedometer. Suddenly a blue light was flashing behind me, and I pulled over feeling embarrassed and irritated by my carelessness. Mercifully I received a warning rather than a ticket, but as I turned back to my car the officer called after me: "Miss Canham, SLOW DOWN!" Slow down. Yes God, *You* seem to be saying that to me also. "Take time to listen, stop doing and try being for a while. What is all the rushing about for anyway?" I recall words of Jesus, spoken to busy, enthusiastic disciples who were excited about their ministry: "Come apart by yourselves and rest awhile." Once again I turn to my

journal, and begin to dialogue with God and pray that I might learn how to allow more waiting and listening time in my prayer.

Signs on buildings, pots and pans, daily duties, weeds, birds and traffic officers, all these "ordinary" things became "extraordinary"—they were the means by which the presence of God was made known. And so each new day I wait to see where God will surprise me by suddenly becoming visible in the simple everydayness of life. This, too, is prayer.

Interfaith Affirmations

DAVID RICHO

I am thankful for the gift of enduring faith.
I acknowledge a meaning in every chaos.
I trust a loving power within and beyond myself.
I live fully only in dialogue with this power and with all humankind.
I acknowledge: a world beyond my senses,
a truth beyond the need for evidence,
a wisdom beyond logic,
a source of power beyond human limits,
and a trustworthy reality that defies what facts may show.
I honor each phase of my own faith journey.
I seek community with others on the path to greater faith.
I grieve any abuses from my religious past.
I recover the riches of my religious past.
I embrace the givens of life; beginnings and endings,
aloneness, change, suffering,
unpredictability, and unfairness.
I say yes unconditionally to what is.
I say yes unconditionally to change what is ready to change.
I open myself to every transformation that is happening or about to happen.
I reclaim my own body as a channel of spirituality.
I celebrate my human passions and powers.
I am thankful for the graces that aid and yet surpass my will, effort and intellect.
I drop the need for certainty; I am comfortable with ambiguity.
I am open to knowing more and more about faith and spirituality.
I honor the great events and persons of faith as metaphors of and guides for my own journey.
I grow in faith within community.
I let go of guilt and take responsibility.
I let go of guilt and make amends.

Dr. David Richo, a psychologist in Santa Barbara, CA, writes on the integration of spirituality with psychological work. His latest book is How to be an Adult *(Paulist Press, 1991).*

I let go of fear and obligation and act from love and choice.
I let go of bias, elitism, and exclusivism.
I spread compassionate and boundless love wherever I go.
I keep finding an inner peace beneath every burden.
I trust the all-powerful love that holds and upholds me.
I consecrate myself to join with others to end war and injustice in our lifetime.
I keep finding new companions on my journey of faith.
I redeem the earth and include all humanity in my love.
My only search is for that which is always and already mine.
For all that has been: Thanks!
For all that will be: Yes!
Dag Hammarskjold

Tom Dunham

ECO-SPIRITUALITY: TOWARD A REVERENT LIFE
by Charles Cummings, Paulist Press, Mahwah/New York, 1991, 164 pages, paperback, $9.95.

Fr. Cummings believes that "eco-spiritual living" on the part of the individual can prevent the overwhelming devastation of the earth that is now threatening to take place.

Spirituality and science can work together toward global healing if the individual commits his or her heart to the task. "One person's effort to car-pool or use public transportation may be negligible," he writes, "but if thousands of people were to make the same effort, the difference would be apparent to all."

THE HEART OF THE BUDDHA
by Chögyam Trungpa, Shambhala, Boston and London, 1991, 259 pages, paperback, $14.00.

The sacred outlook of Buddhism on the great mysteries of life and death is explained by the most renowned teacher of Buddhism in the West. Twenty-five hundred year old understandings unfold with remarkable clarity in sections on the "Personal Journey," "Stages on the Path," and "Working with Others." Trungpa affirms the essential goodness of the human being and the role of devotion in unlocking the power of that goodness.

PSYCHOLOGY OF RELIGION: CLASSIC AND CONTEMPORARY VIEWS
by David M. Wulff, John Wiley and Sons, New York, 1991, 768 pages, hardback.

The widespread influence of the contemporary spiritual renaissance is felt in this unique and comprehensive book. Some of the world's most distinguished psychologists—Freud, Jung, Erikson, William James, and many others—are brought into relationship with religious faith, experience and practices.

Highly recommended as a college textbook, as a resource for psychotherapists and spiritual directors, and for everyone with a serious interest in religion and psychology.

We welcome your comments. Please send them to The Editor, Fellowship in Prayer, 291 Witherspoon Street, Princeton, NJ 08542.

This past August, I traveled to Russia with other missionaries from Presbyterian churches around the country. Our purpose was to help Russian people restore churches and monasteries which have fallen to disuse in recent decades. I spent most of my time in Dimidov, population 1200, rebuilding St. Troitsky Monastery.

You had given me 225 back issues of *Fellowship in Prayer* as a gift for the Russian people. On the first evening in Dimidov, I gave away about 50 copies, letting people know that subscriptions to *FiP* are free in formerly communist countries. The second evening more people came, asking for the booklets that had been handed out the previous evening, and soon I was out of booklets.

Since very few people in Dimidov speak English, I wondered what they were doing with the journals. I learned that a number of people would gather at the home of someone who spoke English and that person would translate the articles for the rest of the group. In this way, your message about the power of prayer spread rapidly through the town.

You had also given me a check for $85 to cover the cost of shipping the box of journals. However, the airline did not charge our missionary group for items that would be left in Russia, so I donated your $85 to the St. Troitsky Monastery toward its restoration. Thank you!

Michael Mayer; Robinsville, NJ

There aren't enough words to show my appreciation for all who have made *Fellowship in Prayer* possible. I praise God for each and everyone of you. Thank you!

James Whittenberg; Vacaville, CA

I love the work of your photographer, Janet Gnall. I have a sense that it is inner work that speaks so beautifully through her photos. Her cover on the February, 1991, issue was outstanding.

My own inner work is expressed in the form of song writing—and someday I will share that with her.

Celeste Billhartz; Kent, OH

I just wanted to let you know that for years your wonderful *Fellowship in Prayer* journal has brought a warm comforting glow to the confused lives

of several men housed on San Quentin's Death Row. Each issue of the magazine stimulates us to sit and discuss our thoughts and feelings from new perspectives that have an immediate impact on the way we conduct our lives with each other. It also affects the way we confront what dwells in our own hearts when we are alone in our cells late at night.

Thank you for the light that radiates from the pages of your publication.

Douglas Scott Mickey; Tamal, CA

Each issue of *FiP* is a cool, refreshing breeze blowing into my life. Thank you!

Jerome B. Robben; St. Louis, MO

Today I am reaching out in the hope that someone will respond to me out of concern. At this very moment I'm in a place where I exchanged the dignity of my name for the degradation of a prison number.

As I conclude 13 years of service here in prison, I am totally at peace and trust that the merciful Lord will look upon my time of imprisonment as compensation for my having fallen short of divine expectations. In 1978 I attempted to use people and various kinds of addictive behavior to satisfy a deep craving and sense of loneliness and separation from society. I have learned here that the very process of accepting and embracing our feelings is how we can say "yes" to life, to love, and to God.

The feelings of pain, hurt and anger result when love is withheld. God lives in the heart of every man and woman, and in order to experience God we need only to surrender in silence to all that is found there.

A letter carries a message I can hold on to. It would be a privilege to hear from you.

Paul Swisher; Kansas State Penitentiary; Lansing, KS 66043

Congratulations on the current issue!

S. Gertrude Shanahan; Chicago, IL

Paqui Nelson wrote a letter to the editor in your June, 1991, issue, asking if there were any retreat centers in the country that were inclusive of all religions. Our centers, which were founded by Swami Paramananda in 1906, are dedicated to honoring all the world religions. We may be contacted at Ananda Ashrama, Box 8555, 5301 Pennsylvania Ave, La Crescenta, CA 91214.

We love your journal.

S. Sudha; Ananda Ashrama, La Crescenta, CA

FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER, INC.

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We welcome articles on prayer, meditation, spiritual experience, religious faith or practices, and similar topics. Preference is given to experiential manuscripts. Manuscripts should not exceed 1500 words, should be typed, double spaced, and sent to The Editor, Fellowship in Prayer, 291 Witherspoon Street, Princeton, NJ 08542. Please include a biography of no more than five lines.

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